

The Effectiveness of Positive Psychology Training on the Resiliency and Job Satisfaction of Government Employees

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Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of positive psychology training on the resiliency and job satisfaction of government employees in Hamadan province.

Method: The statistical population of this quasi-experimental study consisted of all government employees of Hamadan province in spring 2019. From this statistical population, 30 individuals (15 in an experimental group, 15 in a control Group) were purposively selected as the subjects of the study and were randomly assigned into one control group and one experimental group. Pre-test and post-test were used to collect research data by two standard questionnaires: "Job Satisfaction Questionnaire" and "Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale ". Data analysis was done by SPSS software version 25 using analysis of covariance and MANCOVA.

Results: The results showed that positive psychology training can optimize and increase resiliency and job satisfaction in adverse conditions.

Conclusion: Based on the findings of this study, positive psychology training can be considered as an effective way to promote resiliency and job satisfaction of employees, and is recommended to increase their job satisfaction.

Keywords: Positive Psychology, Job Satisfaction, Resiliency

Introduction

Optimal utilization of enterprise staff capabilities is one of the primary goals of any organization. When it comes to job satisfaction, employees usually perform their duties more fully, better and with minimal resources. On the other hand, when there is lack of job satisfaction, leaving work, being absent and drop in function will increase [1].

According to Alessio, job satisfaction means, a positive and pleasant feeling of the employee about his / her job that they derive from the interaction between various factors including working conditions, rules governing the organization, employee relations in the workplace, social status of the job, income and cultural factors [2]. Numerous studies point to the fact that people who are unhappy with their job are more susceptible to a variety of illnesses, ranging from headaches, fatigue and heart failure to heart disease [2].

The results of a research by Blustein, Kenny, Di Fabio, Guichard in 2019 showed that stress at work affects beliefs, lifestyle and mental health. One of the things that can help with job satisfaction is a psychological component called resiliency. Resiliency is a capacity for resistance to stress and disaster. Promoting resiliency leads people to develop better self-management thinking and skills and more knowledge [3].

Connor and Davidson [4] have defined resiliency as a way of measuring one's ability to cope with stressors and factors that threaten one's mental health. Block [5] identifies ways to gain resiliency as being stubborn, self-serving, repressive confrontation, having a positive

mood and feelings. From a psychological point of view, resilient individuals have five key characteristics that include: feeling valued; problem solving skills; social competence; optimism and empathy. Resiliency does not relieve stress and eliminate life's problems, but empowers people to face the challenges ahead, overcome adversity and move on with life. Some people naturally have these features, but it is not limited to a few and according to experts, others can learn and improve resiliency [1].

The most important practical consequence of resiliency in research is that we can enhance the ability of individuals to achieve a sense of identity and efficiency, decision-making, targeting, and belief in the future. In this way, they can put their basic human needs for kindness, relationship with others, challenge, power and meaning in stressful situations as the focus of any preventive, educational and personal growth interventions [6].

In recent decades there has been a great deal of scientific movement in organizational psychology that can be used to create suitable conditions in the workplace, in addition to the quality of the job, staff, workers and employees can enjoy good mental health and even enjoy their jobs. Effectiveness of specialized training such as positive thinking or world-standard models to employed people can not only help people's mental health, but can also help optimize their working conditions and quality of employment. In the studies of Seligman [7] and Cabrera [8] the effect of a positive-thinking psychosocial intervention program on improving work quality and resiliency under hard work conditions as well as its positive effect on job exhaustion has been addressed. Thinking positively as a technic in psychology shows us how to feel good about ourselves, build valuable relationships with others, follow rational principles in our decisions, and meet life's challenges and not passing the buck [9].

This view places great emphasis on promoting positive performance and seems to focus exclusively on issues such as happiness, satisfaction and peace [10]. Positive psychology shows us how dynamic the impact of positive emotion is [11]. The positive psychology's theoretical foundation is rooted in Seligman's work, which states that happiness is a joyful, committed, and meaningful life. The experience of positive emotions that positive psychology emphasizes often provides a better ability to adapt and be more resilient to life's problems [12]. Psychological research shows that a person optimistic about the future evaluates stressful situations with a positive outlook and has a good understanding of his or her ability to handle problems and uses more problem-focused coping strategies to deal with them. As a result, optimism seems to play an important role in coping with stressful situations [6, 13].

Another factor that is very important in the lives of individuals and especially employees and that has a great effect on their mood and behavior is job satisfaction. Overall, job satisfaction is the kind of positive and enjoyable feeling a person has at work. Most scholars generally consider social factors, the work environment, and the role of work in job satisfaction to be effective. All

job satisfaction theories somehow address the needs of individuals, both material and psychological, and consider the demands and expectations of employees important. Mental stress acts as a motivating force if it is low and increases workload. If the stress is high, it can impair one's functioning. Occupational stress is a type of psychological stress that causes dissatisfaction with work and has a negative impact on individual, social and family life [14].

Numerous studies point to the fact that people who are dissatisfied with their job are more susceptible to a variety of illnesses, ranging from headaches, fatigue and inability to heart disease etc. Another is the impact of job satisfaction on the whole system of the society. Employees, who are satisfied with their jobs, move to the satisfaction of citizens. They value their lives and their surroundings with a more positive attitude, and are more active in the health and well-being of the community. So one can say that job satisfaction is a positive feeling about one's job which is a result of factors such as work environment, organization management, relationships between employees and cultural factors. Actually, job satisfaction increases individual efficiency and satisfaction and finally job success [15].

The results of this study can be of interest to stakeholders in reducing job dissatisfaction and resilience and increasing human resource productivity, especially among public sector employees who sometimes face severe work difficulties and occupational hazards. Therefore, authorities and planners in this field can make good use of the results of similar research and also the present study.

Method

This quasi-experimental study had a pretest-posttest design along with experimental and control groups. After assigning the subjects to two experimental and control groups, positive psychology training was conducted in fourteen 45-minute sessions on the experimental group. Immediately after the training sessions, the post-test was administered and the pre-test and post-test results were compared between the experimental and control groups. The population of this study included all managers and government employees of the Hamadan province in the in spring 2019 which were about 67 thousand people. The sampling method was purposive and based on the research questionnaires and 300 government employees were selected as the sample. By using the Resiliency and Job Satisfaction Questionnaires, 137 of them scored lower than average in both fields. Ninety of them were selected by random draw for the first stage. Thirty people were selected in the final stage which didn't have optimized results in both resiliency and job satisfaction. Then they were randomly divided into two experimental and control groups (15 in each group).

The criteria for the sample group included: scores less than 50 on resiliency scale, scores equal or less than 72 on the job satisfaction questionnaire, and having a minimum age of 40 years or older. The exclusion criteria included individuals with debilitating diseases, severe cardiovascular disorders, and restrictive musculoskeletal

disorders (the presence or absence of these diseases was assessed by self-questioning) and individuals attending at least three-quarters of the training sessions.

The tools used in this research were as follows:

Connor Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC): The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) is a 25-question instrument that measures the resiliency construct at a five-point Likert scale from zero to four. The minimum resiliency score on this scale is zero and the maximum score is 100. This scale assesses different dimensions of resilience, including sense of individual ability, resistance to negative influences, positive acceptance of change, confidence in individual instincts, sense of support and social security, spiritual faith, and pragmatic approaches to problem solving. The results of a preliminary study on the psychometric properties of this scale confirmed its reliability and validity [4]. This scale was standardized in Iran by Karimi et al [16] and its validity and reliability were obtained. In Karimi and et al.'s research [16], in order to determine the validity, at first, the correlation of each item with the total score was calculated and then the factor analysis method was used. The KMO value was 0.87 and the chi-square value in Bartlett's test was 5556.28. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the reliability of resiliency scale and the reliability coefficient was 0.89.

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire: The standard Job Satisfaction Questionnaire of Smith et al., commonly known as JDI, was used to measure job satisfaction. This standard questionnaire consists of 72 questions or items that cover 5 indicators (type of job, supervisor, co-workers, promotion, salaries and benefits). The first part of the questionnaire includes demographic data such as marital status, latest degree, history, job experience and age [17]. All of these coefficients were statistically significant at 0.05 levels. The range of validity for the whole test and its different parts ranged from 0.61 to 0.71, with all coefficients being significant at 0.05 levels [17]. As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire contains 72 closed-ended questions containing three options of 'yes', 'no' and 'I don't know' and gives a score of three or zero to

each answer (yes and no) and one score to the answer of I don't know. Obviously, the answer (I don't know) is an indicator of dissatisfaction than an indicator of job satisfaction [18]. This test was performed for the first time in 1990 by Arshadi [19]. In the Iran Southern Regions Company. The reliability coefficients of different sections of the test ranged from 0.73 to 0.85. The total correlation coefficient was 0.61 and with the Quine and Shepard test was 0.66. According to Arshadi [19]. The validity coefficients of the different sections ranged from 0.24 to 0.71.

Results

In this study, 16 participants were female and 14 of them were male. Seven participants had an associate degree, 10 of them had under associate degree and 18 had university education. According to the results, the control group had 10 (22.2%) women and five (11.1%) men. In the control group less than two (4.4%) had high school diploma, four (8.9%) of them had diploma nine (20%) of them were university students, three of them had less than a diploma (6.7%), three (6.7%) were diplomas and 10 (22.2%) were university graduates.

According to the information in Table 1, in the resiliency variable, there was not a significant difference in the pre-test between the experimental and control groups. This is while in the post-test, these differences were greater in the experimental group, despite no significant changes in the control group. The mean score of the resiliency variable in the control group was 43.47 with a standard deviation of 4.05; in the experimental group it was 51.47 with a standard deviation of 3.04.

In the job satisfaction variable, there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test. This is while in the post-test, these differences were greater in the experimental group, despite there was no significant changes in the control group. The mean score of job satisfaction in the control group was 63.93 with a standard deviation of 3.04. Also, the mean score in the experimental group was 76.13 with a standard deviation of 2.95.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of resiliency and job satisfaction

Variable	Time	Group	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Sd
Resiliency	Pretest	Control	15	38	49	43.80	3.53
		Experiment	15	36	48	43.13	2.88
	Posttest	Control	15	36	50	43.47	4.05
		Experiment	15	45	55	51.47	3.04
Job Satisfaction	Pretest	Control	15	58	69	64.27	3.43
		Experiment	15	58	71	64.80	4.43
	Posttest	Control	15	59	69	63.93	3.04
		Experiment	15	69	80	76.13	2.95

Table 2. Results of status measurement of the research variables' normality using shapiro-wilk test

Variable	N	d.f	Z	P
Pre-test Resiliency	30	30	0.97	0.332
Post-test Resilience	30	30	0.97	0.344
Pre-test Job Satisfaction	30	30	0.96	0.314
Pre-test Job Satisfaction	30	30	0.97	0.328

According to the information in Table 2 since Shapiro–Wilk statistics and estimation error for all the studied variables were calculated above the pre-test and post-test level above 0.05 which indicates no significant difference in the levels of the variables under study, indicating that the relevant data are normal.

Positive psychology training is effective on employee resiliency.

As the F value of the interaction between the covariate and independent variables (0.054) was not significant and was obtained at the error level above (0.05), so this result indicates that the slope of the dependent variable regression is not different at different levels of the independent variable, in which case the main condition of the covariance test is fulfilled. Therefore, the null hypothesis isn't rejected and indicates that the

assumption of homogeneity of the regression slope is met. The sixth hypothesis and hypothesis test, namely, linearity of co-dependent and dependent regression, were performed simultaneously.

Using the pre-test F-rank statistic (21.303) calculated at the acceptable error level (0.05), it can be concluded that the assumption of linearity of the covariance and dependent regression is observed. The results presented in the fourth row of the study groups indicate the final result of the analysis of covariance. Since the F-statistic of this row (71.865) was obtained at the confidence level of 0.95, there is a significant difference between the mean of the groups, so the null hypothesis has been rejected and the research hypothesis have been confirmed. So it must be admitted that positive psychology training is effective on employee resiliency and has an impact on job satisfaction.

Table 3. Default survey of regression line slope homogeneity

(Source)	(SS)	(df)	(MS)	F	Sig
Correction Model (column)	665.71	3	221.90	32.20	0.001
Cut	47.51	1	47.51	7.11	0.01
Group	46.63	1	46.63	6.97	0.01
Pretest	127.16	1	127.16	19.02	0.001
Group* Variable Pre-test	27.17	1	27.17	4.06	0.05
residue (error)	173.75	26	6.68	****	****
Total	68432	30	****	****	****
Total correction	839.46	29	****	****	****

Table 4. Covariance analysis of the impact of positive psychology training on resiliency of subjects

(Source)	(SS)	(df)	(MS)	F	Sig
Correction model (column)	638.53	2	319.27	42.90	0.001
Cut	35.93	1	35.93	4.82	0.03
Variable pre-test	158.53	1	158.53	21.30	0.001
Study Groups	534.81	1	534.81	71.86	0.001
Residue (error)	200.93	27	7.44	****	****
Total	68432	30	****	****	****
Total correction	839.46	29	****	****	****

Table 5. Default survey of regression line slope homogeneity

(Source)	(SS)	(df)	(MS)	F	Sig
Correction Model (column)	1243.31	3	414.57	87.45	0.001
Cut	116.09	1	116.09	24.49	0.001
Group	29.24	1	29.24	6.17	0.02
Pretest	126.84	1	126.84	26.75	0.001
Group* Variable Pre-test	12.52	1	12.52	2.64	0.11
Residue (error)	123.24	26	4.74	****	****
Total	148507	30	****	****	****
Total correction	1366.96	29	****	****	****

Since the F value of the interaction between the covariate and independent variables (2.643) was not significant and was obtained at the error level higher than (0.05), so this result indicates that the slope of the dependent variable regression is not different at the different levels of the independent variable. Therefore, the

null hypothesis isn't rejected and indicates that the assumption of homogeneity of the regression slope is met. The sixth hypothesis and hypothesis test, namely, linearity of covariance and dependent regression, were performed simultaneously.

The results of both are shown below:

Table 6. Covariance analysis of the impact of positive psychology training on job satisfaction

(Source)	(SS)	(df)	(MS)	F	Sig
Correction Model (column)	1231.19	2	615.59	122.41	0.001
Cut	144.16	1	144.16	28.66	0.001
Variable Pre-test	114.89	1	114.89	22.84	0.001
Study Groups	1061.79	1	1061.79	211.14	0.001
Residue (error)	135.77	27	5.02	****	****
Total	148507	30	****	****	****
Total correction	1366.96	29	****	****	****

It can be deduced that the assumption of linearity of the regression coefficient and the dependent variable is observed by using the value of the variable F-row pre-test statistic (22.847) calculated at the acceptable error level (0.05). The results presented in the fourth row, namely the study groups, show the final result of the analysis of covariance. Since the F-statistic of this row (211.144) was obtained at the confidence level of 0.95, there is a significant difference between the mean groups, so the null hypothesis has been rejected and the research hypothesis have been confirmed. So it must be admitted that positive psychology training has an impact on job satisfaction.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of healthy positive psychology training on job resiliency and job satisfaction of government employees in Hamadan province. This quasi-experimental study was conducted on all government employees of Hamadan province. Thirty people were selected as the target population and were randomly divided into control and experimental groups. The control group received no training but the experimental group received positive psychology training and the experimental group received training in 14 sessions. Pre-test and post-test were used to collect research data by two standard questionnaires: "JDI Job Satisfaction" and "Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)". The validity and reliability of both questionnaires have been investigated and confirmed in previous research and in this paper. Data analysis was done by SPSS software version 25 using analysis of covariance and MANCOVA.

In the first hypothesis, the effect of positive psychology training on staff resiliency was investigated. Hypothesis testing performed by analysis of covariance showed that changes in the resiliency of the subjects in the experimental group after receiving positive psychology training, had consistency and generality thus was statistically significant. Accordingly, the absence of significant changes in the control group and positive changes in the experimental group (positive psychology training) indicates that positive psychology training can improve and increase resiliency in adverse conditions. Therefore, it can be accepted that positive psychology training as a scientific method is effective on employee resiliency. According to Amini and Navid [20], in recent years, positive psychology has focused on human abilities and virtues, examining factors in humans that lead to mental health, happiness, and life satisfaction even under risky conditions. Also, according to Duck et al. [21], most people in difficult conditions seek greater satisfaction and more pleasure than simply reducing their sadness and worry. They seek to build on their strengths and tend to live meaningful and purposeful lives [22].

Obviously, these conditions are not simply achieved by relieving pain and discomfort. Positive psychology, in addition to giving people a positive view, also enables them to find positive solutions. According to Seligman et al. [7], positive psychologists believe that their techniques not only reduce people's level of depression, but also

teaches them the right way to live, resulting in life satisfaction and ultimately happiness. Therefore, positive psychotherapy can reduce vulnerability to resilience not only by reducing negative syndromes but also by directly and effectively generating positive emotion, character strengths, and meaning. Positive psychotherapy cannot only create positive resources but can also have a negative impact on the negative symptoms and may also be a barrier to their occurrence [23].

Fiorilli et al. [24] also believe that positive psychotherapy interventions can reduce depression and increase happiness and well-being by enhancing positive emotions, positive thoughts and behaviors, and satisfying basic needs such as autonomy, love and attachment. Hartley [25] argues that resiliency plays a role in mental health as a component of positive psychology because resiliency is a kind of overall capacity used to prevent and minimize problems.

On the other hand, according to the resiliency protection model [26], positive factors in one's life can compensate for some risks while interacting with other factors to reduce negative consequences. They also believe that while some people are naturally resilient, others must practice to have it. Experts [27, 28] also emphasize the resilience skills learned and say that resiliency training can be taught and positive education as a scientific method endorsed by most contemporary and modern psychologists.

These studies, like other research, have limitations, namely that the present study was specific to subjects and government departments of Hamadan city, which in any case had their specific characteristics and due to cultural and organizational differences between offices and cities and cities. Different provinces and their individual differences limit the generalizability of research findings. Another limitation of this study was that due to administrative-organizational problems and lack of time, it was not possible to follow the results of the training course in order to reduce the limitations. Is provided; 1. In others 2. Further research focuses on the smaller dimensions of resilience and job satisfaction and the impact of positive psychology training on the smaller components of these two components; 3. Proposed data collection Psychological interviews should be used instead of questionnaires. It is hoped that the results of this study will be designed to enhance the level of psychological well-being of individuals in various fields in government departments by educational experts and in the form of scientific competitions, freelance studies, etc. And contracted employees are.

Conclusion

The results of the present study showed that positive psychology training affected both components of resilience and job satisfaction but there was no significant difference between the two educational methods in terms of resilience.

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